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TO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0000
INFO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0000

UNCLAS STATE 076133

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#)
SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR UNGA DEBATE ON RESPONSIBILITY TO
PROTECT

¶1. (U) This is an action request: The Department requests that USUN draw from the points below during the UN General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) scheduled for July 23, 2009.

¶2. (U) Begin points:

Thank you, Mr. President. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report. We are grateful to have the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Since the Holocaust, the world has often said, &Never again,⁸ but too often we have failed to give those words real meaning and strength. The horrors that we witnessed in the 20th century are not inevitable. That is why the United States is determined to work with the international community to prevent and respond to such atrocities.

Four years ago, in this hall, UN member states adopted by consensus the Responsibility to Protect at the World Summit. The Responsibility to Protect^{or}, as it has come to be known, R2P^{*}represents an important step forward in the long historical struggle to save lives and guard the well being of people endangered by conflict.

The Responsibility to Protect is rooted in the principle that sovereignty comes with responsibility, and that states have a particular obligation to protect their populations from such atrocities as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. It holds that other states have a corollary responsibility to assist a state in meeting this fundamental responsibility through appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means to take collective action, through the United Nations, if that state is manifestly failing to do so.

The Responsibility to Protect follows a path set forth by our African colleagues in the African Union's Constitutive Act, where, united, they took a pledge of &non-indifference⁸ in the face of mass crimes. R2P complements principles of international humanitarian and human rights law to which we have all committed. Responsibility to Protect reflects our collective recognition of past failures to save innocent people from the worst forms of abuse.

And the United States supports this important progress.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General reminds us that the grave crimes of the last century were not confined to any particular part of the world. They occurred in the North and in the South, and in countries both poor and affluent. Sometimes they were linked to ongoing conflicts and sometimes they were not. He also reminds us that we still know too little about the paths that lead to mass atrocities.

In the 21st century, we cannot wait for genocide, war crimes,

crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing to occur. We must look at ways to prevent these human tragedies. The Secretary-General's report provides an important framework for operationalizing R2P. The three pillars⁸ elaborated in the report draw attention to the policies and instruments that we need to mobilize. They highlight the need to strengthen early warning and conflict management, improve coordination of international efforts, and ensure sufficient resources.

First, we must address the continuing challenge of translating early warning signs into effective action. The United States strongly supports an effective UN human rights and humanitarian operations machinery, including more credible action from the Human Rights Council, more field work by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Special Procedures, which can provide invaluable information on unfolding or potential calamities.

The UN's mediation standby teams can also play an important role, but these teams need to be strengthened. We still have too few mediators with the right skills ready to deploy in real time*and far too few women.

Second, we do know that the potential for abuse is greatest amid war and civil strife, and we must redouble efforts to prevent and respond swiftly to outbreaks of violence. Effective peacekeeping can help bolster fragile peace processes and provide essential protection to civilians under imminent or ongoing threat of violence. In this respect, it remains vital to continue efforts to incorporate protection training across the activities of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and to broaden UN and NGO efforts to prevent and prosecute sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as sexual and gender-based violence.

The UN's new peacebuilding architecture, including the Peacebuilding Commission, can do more to help stabilize societies trying to leave years of conflict behind them. These efforts must be supported by development funds that arrive sooner, early investments in the core capacities of a struggling state, and assistance for national efforts to reinforce the rule of law, demobilize ex-combatants, and reform the security sector.

We understand better today how poverty, environmental pressures, poor governance, and state weakness raise the risk of civil conflict. The tools at our disposal to address those challenges need to be sharper, stronger, and more consistently deployed.

Finally, there are times when collective action beyond prevention is required. R2P enjoins us to mobilize a wide spectrum of policies and instruments, both as individual nations and as an international community. But we stress that such action does not necessarily involve military intervention. Only rarely, and only in extremis, does that include the use of force.

Mr. President,

We must work together ensure that there will be peace, justice, accountability, and dignity for all. The United States stands prepared to work with all critical partners - the United Nations, regional and sub-regional groups, development banks, donors, and nongovernmental organizations) to these ends.

The greatest obstacle to swift action in the face of sudden atrocity is, ultimately, lack of political will. Together, let us all help one other to have the courage of our convictions and the will to act.

Thank you.
CLINTON